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Visayan Village

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World's Fair

1904

Saint Louis

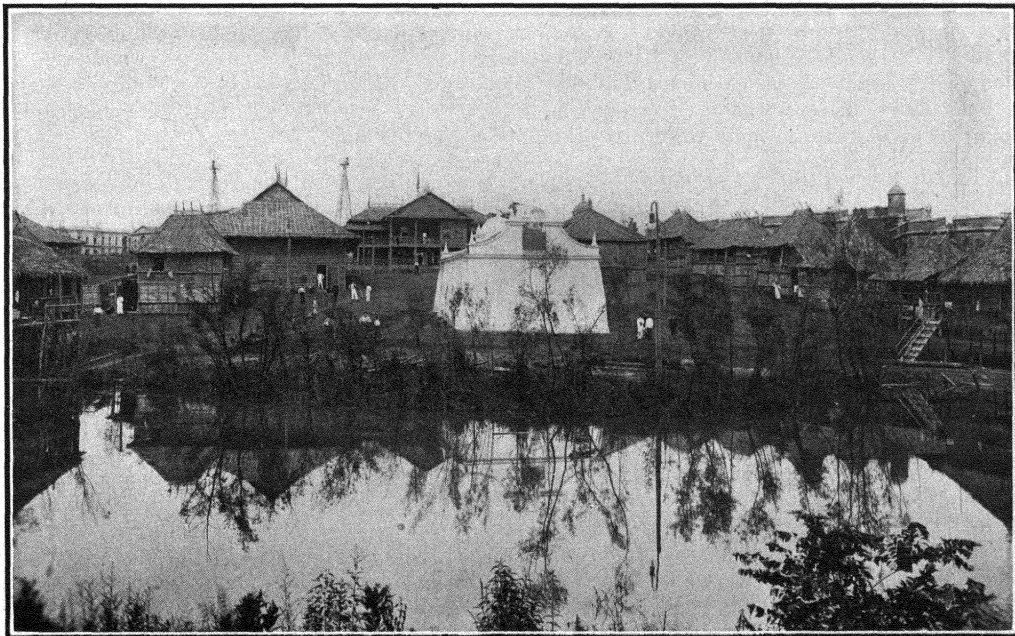
The Visayan Village

AS THE visitor crosses the "Bridge of Spain" from the main section of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition into the Philippine Exposition, he sees immediately at his left along the shore of "Arrowhead Lake" a number of nipa dwellings and a small white chapel. A more extensive view of these buildings is prominent from all points along the west side of the large Agricultural Building. These structures are in the Visayan Village, where there are eight native dwellings, a market, a theatre, and the unique white chapel—a reproduction of the chapel "Santa Rosa de Lima." About one hundred and twenty-five Visayan people from the city of Iloilo, on the island of Panay, are in the village living exactly as they lived in the Philippines. All the native buildings in the village were constructed by them, and here they cook their own native food and hourly pursue their own home occupations.

Every day American visitors enquire whether the Visayan people live in Manila, and when told that they do not, ask "Why, then, was the Visayan selected to represent the Christian and cultured Filipino? Why was not the Tagalog of Manila selected?" The facts are these: The Government of the Philippine Islands sent the natives now at the Exposition to America for educational purposes—to educate both the American and the Filipino. A truer picture of the typical Christian Filipino is presented America at the Visayan Village than would be presented by a village of Tagalog, Ilokano, or any other of the half-dozen Christian dialect groups. According to our recent Philippine census, taken in 1903, there are to-day 6,987,686 Christian Filipinos, of which nearly one-half or 3,250,000 are Visayan. Again the Visayan's modern advancement is more nearly normal than that of the Tagalog, the resident of Manila, of whom and of whose development we in America hear most; the Tagalog has been much more largely influenced by European civilization than has the Visayan, and there is relatively more foreign blood in the veins of the Manila Tagalog than in the Visayan.

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Panorama of Village.

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The Visayan people occupy the central islands of the Philippine Archipelago. They are most prominent on the island of Panay, where they have built the city of Iloilo — the second largest and the second or third most important commercial city in the Archipelago. The neighboring islands of Negros, Cebu, Bohol, Leyte, Samar, Masbate, and a score of smaller ones, are literally covered with the Visayan people. They are also found in numerous centers on the coasts of the large southern island of Mindanao and of the Sulu Archipelago, as is shown by the map on the back cover of this booklet. It is believed the Visayan is a more recent arrival in the Philippines than is the Tagalog, the Ilokano, the Igorot, and the other peoples of Luzon. The movement of Malayan peoples into the Archipelago has been from the south toward the north.

Magellan discovered the Philippines in 1521, and in less than fifty years the Augustinian Friars came among the Visayan people. They continued among them with their teachings of Roman Catholicism and the culture of Spain until the insurrection of 1896. The Jesuits arrived in 1581, and for nearly a hundred years they labored among them spreading Christianity and such secular knowledge as they had to impart, until they were expelled from the Archipelago in 1768. It is to the white-robed Augustinian and the black-robed Jesuit that the Visayan owes practically all of his advancement in modern culture, until the arrival of the American in the Islands. During those earlier years these missionaries not only studied the Visayan language and wrote books in the native tongue, but they taught the lessons of more modern agriculture, and, what is more, they stood with great courage and valor between the helpless, panic-stricken people and the dreaded pirates of the southern seas — the Moros who with gun and cannon harrassed and whip-lashed the coasts. During the first quarter century after the Catholic missionaries went into the Visayan islands fleets of Moro battle proas from Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago overran the shores, until the Bishop of Cebu, Señor Gimeno, petitioned the Spanish Government to occupy southern Mindanao in order to put a stop to Moro piracy. Each year he sent in a record of the people captured from his diocese by the pirates, and some years his record was more than 2,000. For 300 long years the relentless and fanatical "Sea Devils," the Moros of Mindanao, continued to lay waste the Visayan villages, to rob the churches and homes, and to carry away into captivity the Visayan people. The spread of the Visayan population around the Mindanao and Sulu coasts is due almost entirely to the piracy of the Moros. The Christian Visayan helped to make up the native troops which Spain organized to combat the Moro in his own territory, and these people together with liberated captives formed the various clusters of Visayan which have now increased to numerous villages of considerable size in a territory otherwise dominated by the Mohammedan Moro.



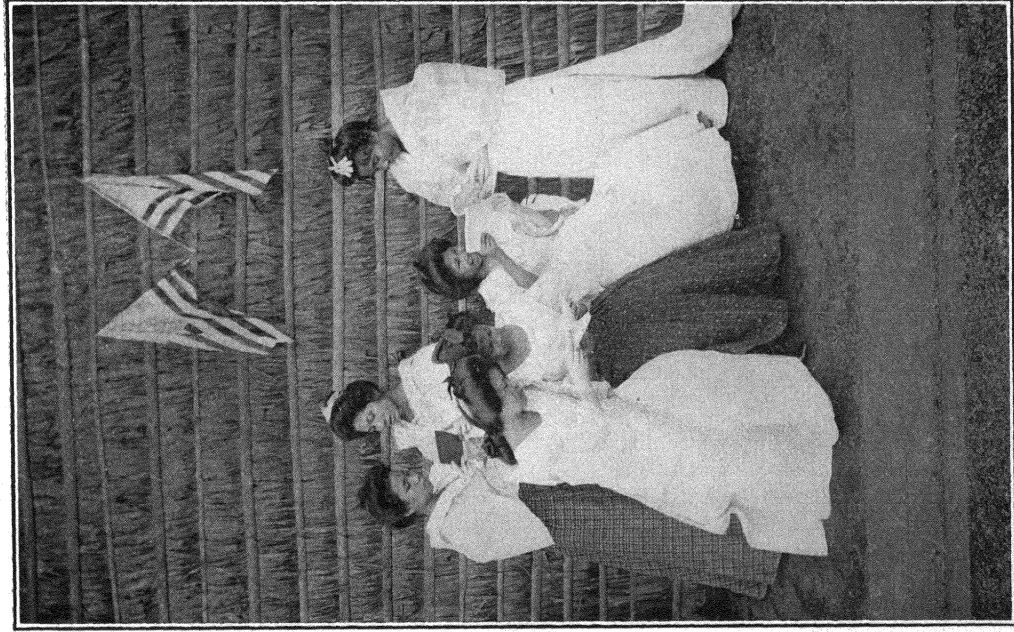
Visayan Orchestra.

In 1603 the Governor-General of the Philippines began to fortify the Visayan island of Panay against the Moros, and it is claimed the foundation of the picturesque old Fort still at Iloilo was laid that year, but it was only fifty years ago that the Spaniard was finally able to stop the piracy of the Moros in the Visayan Islands. The ravages of the pirate compelled the Christian Visayan to build his villages far back from the seashore, and were largely instrumental in causing him to build up large villages for self-protection, rather than small clusters of agricultural communities. This condition of life maintained to such an extent that the vast and profitable sugar plantations of Occidental Negros are owned by people who live across the channel in the wealthy market villages of Jaro and Molo, immediately outside of Iloilo in the islands of Panay.

The Visayan, like all other true Filipinos, except the Negritos, came from an old race of people commonly called "Malayan." He is a chocolate brown man, averaging about five feet and four inches high, the women being about four inches shorter than the men. He has brown eyes and black hair, which is straight or slightly wavy.

Three hundred and fifty years of Spanish culture fortunately have not robbed him of all his primitive tales and beliefs. There is enough in the common mind to enrich a Philippine literature. There is "A-swan'," and "Tu-má-o," and "Man-tú-o." Aswan is a human being who, at night, swims or flies at will. He is thought maliciously to crouch beneath houses when babes are born, and is especially conjured up by the mother to assist her in threatening and controlling disobedient children. Tumao is the opposite of Aswan; he is a small benevolent human being whose delight is to kiss children and playfully to pinch them when they bathe. In the mouth of the mother Tumao is a child's reward and blessing. Mantuo is a giant who stands with a large ax guarding such valuable properties as sugar mills, tobacco factories, and warehouses.

The Philippine Census quotes a prominent Visayan of Oriental Negros as follows, speaking of the Visayan people: "The population is divided into three social classes. The first is composed of families who, on account of their wealth and culture, enjoy a position of leisure and independence. The second class is composed for the most part of honest and industrious families, possessed of small properties, who are very economical, having but little ambition, lovers of order and hospitality; they are happy on account of having but few necessities, and enjoy a position of relative comfort. The third class is formed of the poor, who are farm laborers, servants, fishermen, etc. They are, as a rule, ignorant and therefore fanatical and superstitious. Their lack of education has created but few necessities, and they are therefore indolent. They are generally sober and strong."



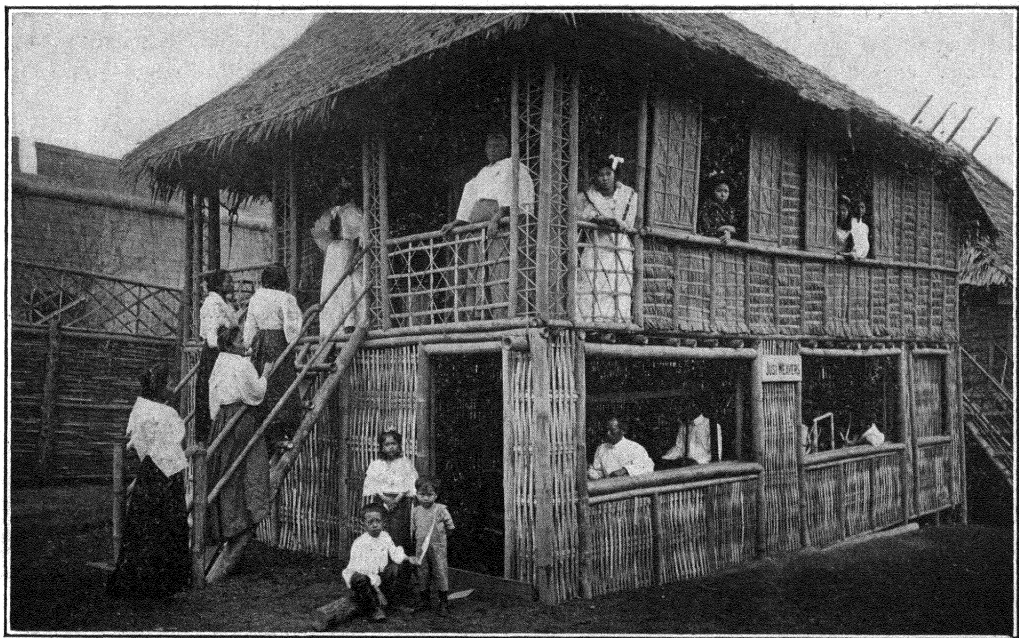
Reading Letters from Home.

The one hundred and twenty-five people in the Visayan Village at the Philippine Exposition are under the careful and able management of Mr. M. R. Healy. Practically all natural phases of their life are shown, except that of agriculture; but even this is suggested by the two carabaos, or water buffalos, seen at the Village drawing about solid wheel carts or happily chewing their cuds lying in the mud and water in "Arrowhead Lake." Nearly all the agriculture of the Islands is carried on by the aid of the carabao, and the immense sugar plantations of the Visayan Islands are now almost idle, due to the recent loss of nine-tenths of the carabaos by the dreaded disease rinderpest.

The Visayan woman has produced the two richest and most beautiful fabrics in the Archipelago, namely jusi and piña. Jusi pronounced "hú-se," is the fashionable dress-cloth of the prosperous native woman, and is justly famous and prized by the American woman in the Islands. Many of the most beautiful evening dresses worn in Manila by American women are made of jusi. Its colors are soft, subdued and rich—lavender, yellow, wine color, black, cream and white are common. Jusi is not only sold in a market in the Visayan Village, but is manufactured there by some of the most expert weavers Mr. Healy could find; two of the women went to Madrid in 1886—expert jusi weavers even then. Jusi is woven of two fibres, silk and very fine white abaca fibre, the so-called "Manila hemp", but in reality a sister plant of the banana. The silk, which comes from China, is woven in the beautiful thin cloth as narrow stripes or as small flowers or detached geometrical figures arranged in narrow lines.

Piña, pronounced "pen'-ya," is woven solely of the fibre of the pine-apple leaf—pine-apple, a sister of our "Century plants." Piña is a pure white, highly lustrous, thin cloth on which the finest embroideries are made. Many of the finely embroidered waists and neck handkerchiefs of the native women are piña, and the American woman has created a large and increasing demand for embroidered piña collars, table covers, doilies, etc. These beautiful embroidered piñas are made and sold in the Village.

Sinamay cloth, pronounced "sín-e-mi," is also woven in the Village by Visayan women; the word means literally "striped cloth." It is woven of coarser fibres than either jusi or piña and is not so costly. Silk, pine-apple fibre and abaca are variously employed in weaving sinamay—two fibres in each pattern. The weaving of these beautiful Visayan fabrics by crude hand-looms is the marvel of expert American textile weavers who have seen the women at their work.



Natives at Home.

There are also hat weavers in the Village who manufacture by hand three kinds of light-weight durable hats for men. There is the lucban palm hat, the buri palm hat, and the nito hat. The famous Baliwag bamboo that is also sold in the Village ; it is the finest, most wonderful hat weaving to be found in the Orient.

Wood carvers are also found in the Village who manufacture and sell beautifully carved "ebony" canes and jewel boxes. One may also see families of fishermen with their nets, wiers, lines and fishing boats on the lake.

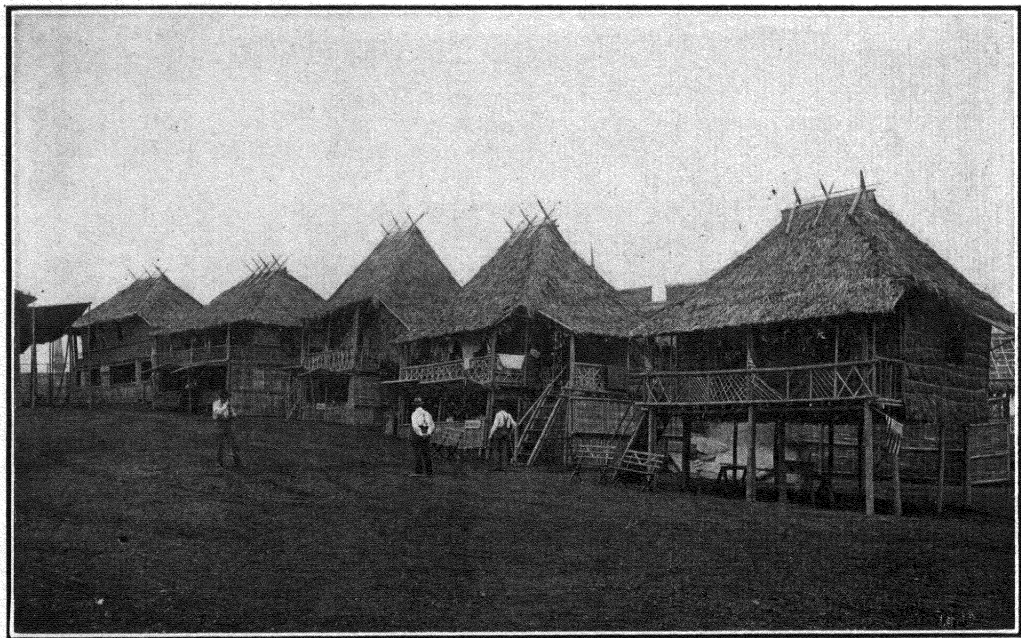
Besides all these varied industrial activities in the Village there is a superior Orchestra, said to be the oldest modern musical organization in the Archipelago, which was organized about thirty years ago and in the Islands is known as the "Santa Barbara" Orchestra. Among the players at present there are ten who have been in the organization since its creation. Every hour in the day the troupe of native players gives an entertainment of Visayan dances, songs and personations in the Theatre of the Village. This entertainment is the rival of any other entertainment given in the entire Exposition ; every day visitors enthusiastically exclaim that it is the most pleasing and gratifying performance they have seen at the Fair.

The Visayan Village is a faithful reproduction of the life of more than three million Christian people in the Archipelago. "It is just like dropping down again in the Philippines," said a recent visitor from the Islands.

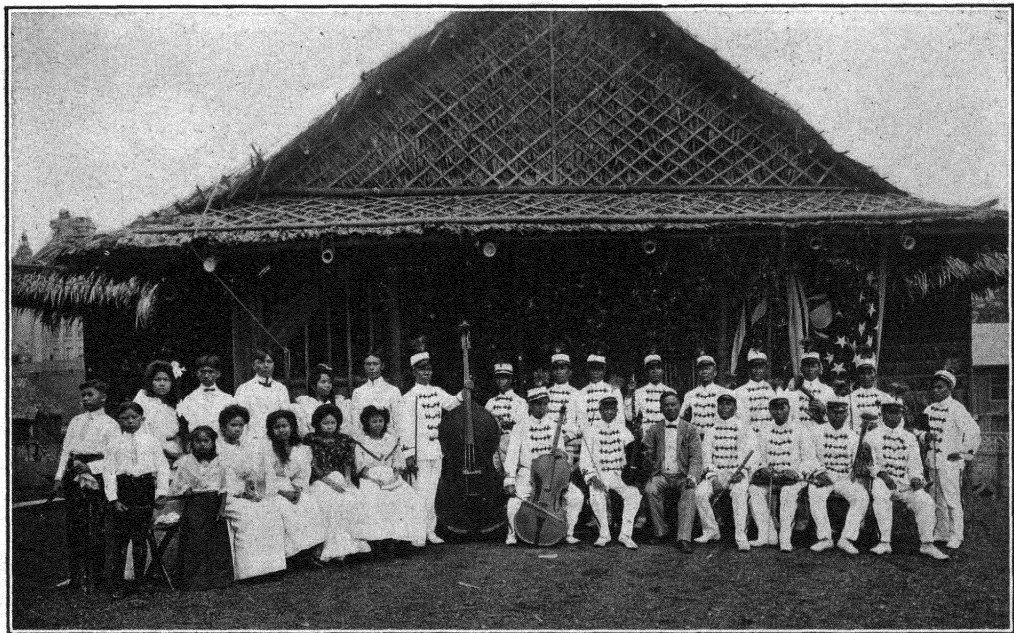
ALBERT ERNEST JENKS,
CHIEF, ETHNOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.



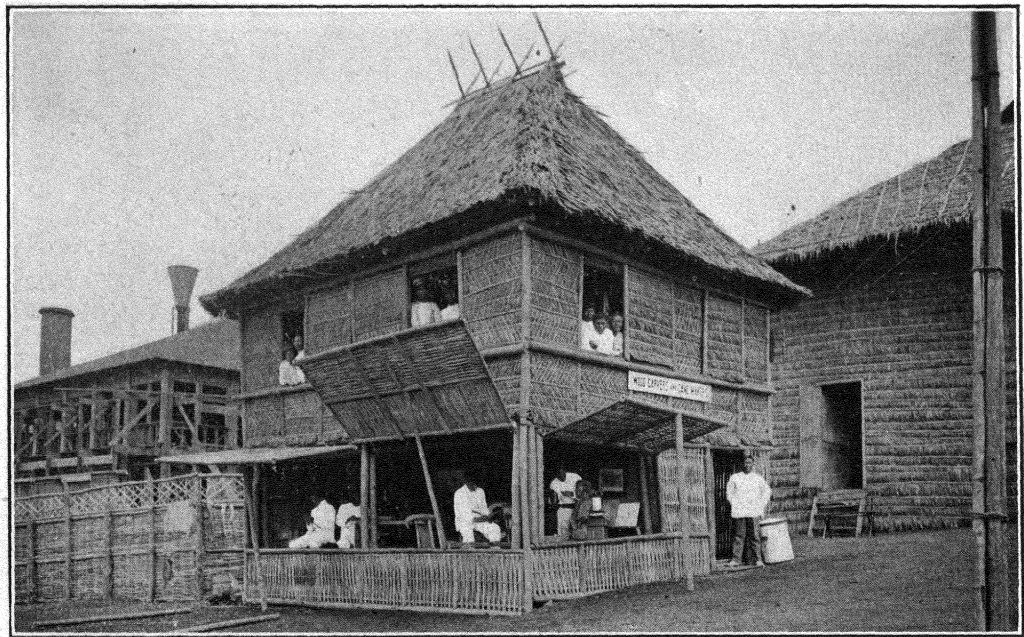
Visayan Entertainers.



Dwellings in Village.



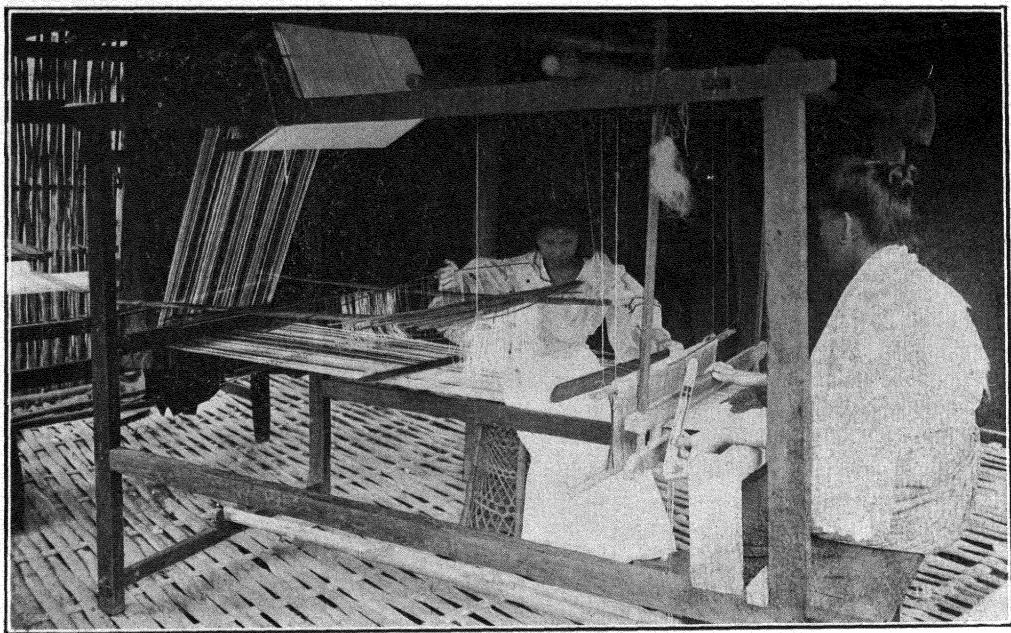
Dancers and Orchestra.



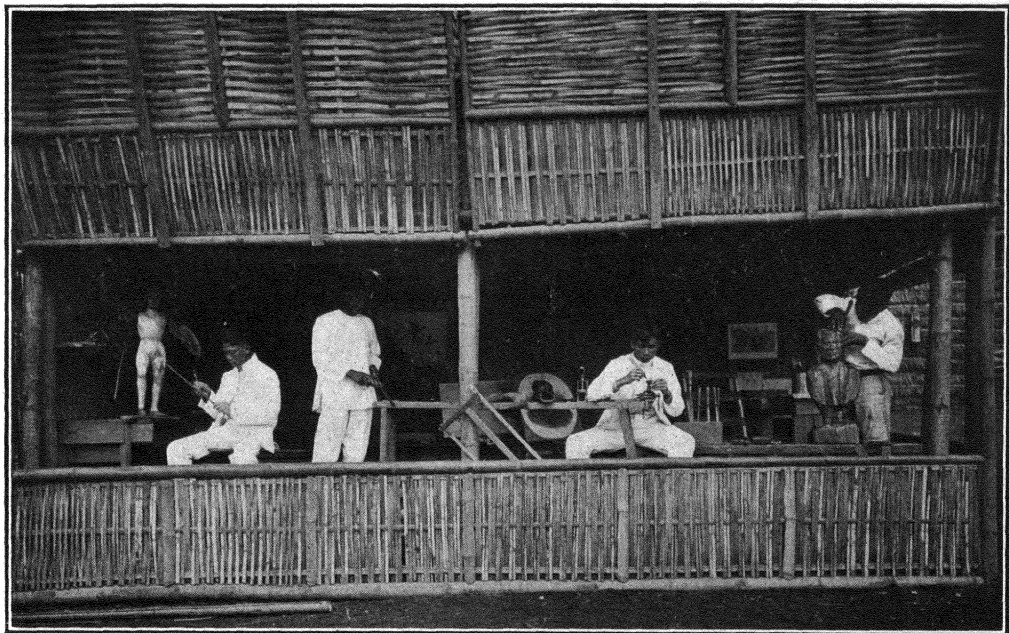
Cane Carvers at Work.



Coming from Early Mass.



Cloth Weaving.

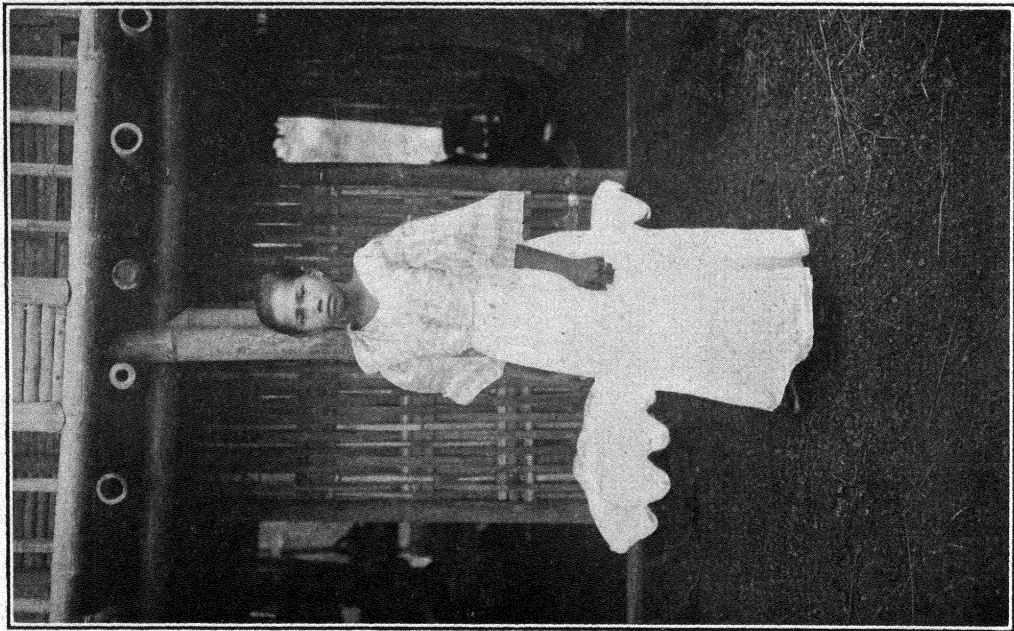


Carvers at Work.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



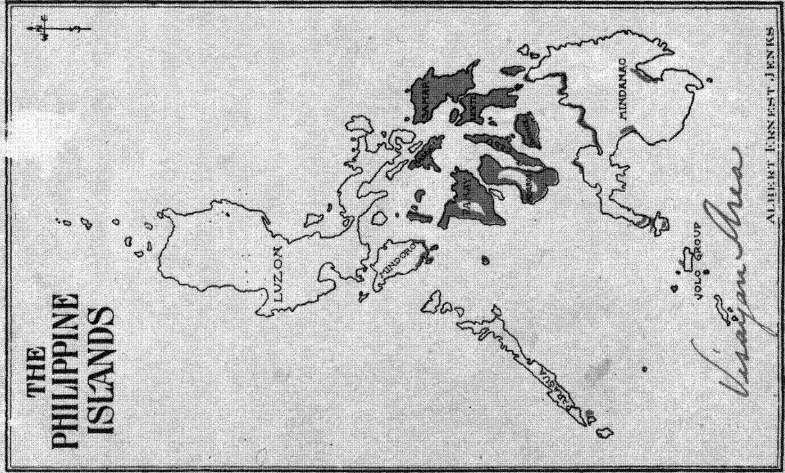
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Visayan Market Girl.

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**THE
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Visayan Area

ALBERT ERNEST JENKIS